

[30003829 US]

1. A method of making block error rate measurements in a layered protocol communications system, comprising the steps of:
- 5 opening and maintaining an information block flow by sending repeated message blocks which are defined at a selected layer in the protocol stack below the topmost layer; and
- monitoring ack/nack messages sent in response to the message blocks to determine whether the message blocks have been correctly transported.
- 10 2. The method of claim 1, wherein the message blocks have a predetermined characteristic which causes the message blocks to be discarded upon processing at the selected protocol layer in a communications unit receiving the message blocks.
- 15 3. The method of claim 1, wherein the communications system is a general packet radio service (GPRS) and the selected protocol layer is a GPRS mobility management layer.
4. The method of claim 3, wherein the repeated message blocks are GMM\_INFORMATION message blocks.
- 20 5. The method of claim 4, wherein the predetermined characteristic comprises absence from a message block of any information elements other than a message header.
6. The method of claim 1, wherein the communications system is a general packet radio service (GPRS) and the selected protocol layer is a GPRS logical link control layer.
- 25 7. The method of claim 6, wherein the repeated message blocks are GRR\_DATA\_REQ message blocks.
- 30 8. The method of claim 7, wherein the predetermined characteristic comprises inclusion in a message block of an invalid frame check sequence.